

My name is Bradford Watson, a sophomore at the University of Connecticut and student in the School of Engineering. I'd like to take this time to express my thoughts and concerns about the proposed budget cuts.

While I appreciate the legislature working together to make the higher education system accessible and affordable, I strongly encourage you to reassess this proposal. According to the four-year schedule of cost increases, cutting \$40 million dollars from the budget and increasing the cost of tuition by 6.75% seems counterproductive. The Board of Regents for Higher Education has made several attempts to keep this tuition increase under 2% yet it is still climbing year after year. This university fosters tertiary education that is firmly rooted in many different disciplines that appeal to each student individually. I firmly believe that because of this all of UConn's multiple disciplinary programs should be allowed to flourish without interference.

The new four-year plan's proposed funding is \$39 million under what UConn needs to maintain current programs and staffing levels. The Next Generation program is designed to hire staff and boost enrollment in STEM majors, yet the implementation needs of the program and the Science Park not going to be met. The cuts are certain to put a significant pressure on college administrators to not only raise the cost of tuition but also reduce how many people they employ. Limiting the amount of quality faculty because UConn can't afford to renew their contracts is also very counterproductive.

When my parents explained that they couldn't afford to send me to college, I chose UConn because my cost of attendance was a fraction of the price anywhere else. I've been afforded the opportunity to live in my own apartment, pay my tuition on my own without parental contribution and maintain my social and academic responsibilities while on campus. After contributing to research in life cycle analysis at the Yale School of Engineering and

Applied Science, as well as analyzing WHO cholera data with the Yale School of Public Health, I feel confident that everything I've learned thus far at UConn has been a contributing factor to my growth in the field of STEM. This type of learning is essential to my continued desire to learn – the need to further my studies in green infrastructure and sustainability. Refinancing the loans of state residents simply isn't enough to continue my education here. UConn is one of the few schools that offer this combination at such an affordable rate. Raising the cost of tuition doesn't help the many students who are in similar or less fortunate situations, who rely on the unique opportunity of attending one of the nation's best public universities at such an affordable cost available to them at UConn.

Thank you for your time.